

THE WAWASET HORROR!

FIFTY PERSONS BURNED TO DEATH OR DROWNED!!

THE TERRIBLE STORY OF THE DISASTER!!

SCENES AT THE POINT OF THE TRAGEDY.

DISTRESSING SCENES IN THIS CITY ON THE ARRIVAL OF THE BODIES.

Last night about half past eleven o'clock great excitement was produced by the report that the well-known Potomac steamer Wawaset had been burned down the river, and that most of the passengers on board had perished. As the news flew from point to point in the city the excitement increased, and many hastened to the foot of 7th street to ascertain the particulars. The report was subsequently confirmed by an Associated Press dispatch from Frederickburg stating that the Wawaset took fire about 11 o'clock yesterday morning at Chatterton's landing, Prince George county, and was entirely destroyed. The dispatch also stated that "she had about one hundred and fifty passengers on board, and between forty and fifty lives are believed to have been lost."

The Wawaset was a small steamer, owned by the late John W. Reed, and was engaged in the trade between Washington and the Potomac. She was commanded by Captain John W. Reed, and had on board a crew of about twenty men. The passengers were mostly families, and included many of the prominent citizens of the city.

The fire broke out suddenly, and in a few minutes the steamer was in flames. The captain and crew made every effort to save the passengers, but the fire was too powerful for them. Many of the passengers were thrown overboard, and the steamer sank in a few minutes.

The bodies of the passengers were found floating in the river, and were brought to the city. The scene was a terrible one, and the people were shocked and horrified.

The fire was caused by a defective boiler, and the steamer was found to be in a state of disrepair. The investigation is still going on, and the results will be made known in a few days.

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body which Mrs. Cobough had just before thought to be that of her sister as that of Mrs. PATTY SANDS, of Westmoreland county, Va., who had been visiting friends in this city.

Statement of Henry Lewis, Dock Hand.

Henry Lewis, colored, one of the dock hands of the steamer Wawaset, gave the following statement this morning to this city.

He states that two colored women, Mrs. Shankland, living on Capitol Hill, and Mrs. Mahala Fleet, residing somewhere near the City Hall, came on board the Wawaset at Taylor's Landing, and that each of them lost a child and were bound up to try and recognize the bodies. The ferry boat City of Washington arrived at 7:30 o'clock from Alexandria, and brought up Susan Parker, Mary Blackwell, and Hiram Blackwell, who belong in Westmoreland county, Va. They were on board the Wawaset, and all three were badly burned.

Statement of John Reed, Captain of the Wawaset.

John Reed, captain of the Wawaset, gave the following statement this morning to this city.

He states that the fire broke out about 11 o'clock yesterday morning at Chatterton's landing, Prince George county, and was entirely destroyed. The dispatch also stated that "she had about one hundred and fifty passengers on board, and between forty and fifty lives are believed to have been lost."

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many were wandering about the shore, and some had started off through the country, so that it was not possible to arrive at the number lost at present, as it is believed that many reported lost are among those named. Mr. Wheeler states that he was among the last to leave the boat.

Statement of the Pilot.

A reporter of THE STAR also called on John W. L. Boswell, the pilot of the vessel. He is burned about the arms and legs. His statement is as follows: "I have been a pilot on the Potomac upwards of nine years. The fireman, at 20 minutes of 12, came to the wheel-house and told me the boat was on fire. The captain was standing outside of the pilot-house at the time. I says, 'Captain, the best thing we can do is to run her ashore the nearest place—Chatterton's landing.' I headed her for the shore, and she struck in five feet of water. I stood in the pilot-house until the wheel ropes broke in two and the fire was coming into the pilot-house. I then jumped overboard and swam ashore with two ladies, whom I saved. I then brought out and landed six or eight passengers. I made a second trip with the boat, and took in three colored women, with a child, who were hanging on to the rudder, and then I jumped overboard. I then swam up again and made two more successful attempts to rescue Officer Reed's wife, but she twisted away from me in each instance, I presume not knowing what she was doing through excitement. When I came back to the stern of the boat for the last time, three children, one white and two colored, were clinging to me. I tried to get them, but they prevented me, and they were all burnt. I then went astern, and bailed out the life-boat, and took nine dead bodies to Stewart's wharf, four white and five colored. I remained at Stewart's wharf until the bodies were taken to the National Hospital, and then I went to the Washington Navy Yard. I came up on the way at Chatterton's landing, and saw the fire on the wheel ropes until the fire drove them off deck. The fireman told me the first place he saw the fire was in the forward bow. I don't think any but Mr. Reed's cousin, Miss Bettie Reed, were lost in jumping out of the bow of the boat. She jumped before the boat struck, and was lost.

Statement of Robert Nash.

An engineer of the boat, The first time I saw the fire was from the forward bow, and I saw the smoke coming out of the funnel. I saw the fire on the wheel ropes until the fire drove them off deck. The fireman told me the first place he saw the fire was in the forward bow. I don't think any but Mr. Reed's cousin, Miss Bettie Reed, were lost in jumping out of the bow of the boat. She jumped before the boat struck, and was lost.

Statement of Samuel A. Nash.

An apprentice engineer aboard the boat, Samuel A. Nash, gave the following statement this morning to this city.

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